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DEMOCRACY IN HIGH-SCHOOL GOVERNMENT

FLOYD S. HAYDEN
Citrus Union High School, Azusa, California

It is the purpose of this article to explain the gradual development during the last seven years of a form of student-faculty co-operative government in Citrus Union High School. The school is located in a semirural community in the foothill Citrus belt east of Los Angeles. During the period with which this report is concerned, the enrolment of the school has grown from approximately one hundred to three hundred students, and junior-college, night-school, and various lines of vocational work have been added.

The school originally had class and student-body organizations with no special objective in view. The interests of the several groups were at such variance that sometimes loyalty to the school was superseded by class or group loyalty. The first task of the school in creating a co-operative spirit among the different group organizations was to develop a kind of superloyalty to the interests of the school as a whole. Athletic, debating, oratorical, and musical contests made a strong appeal to the students, and it was soon realized that in order to win in these contests a united school spirit must be maintained. With this end in view, a Welfare Committee was organized, consisting originally of the four class presidents, the student-body president, and the principal.

The year before the committee began its work, class spirit had run high, manifesting itself in class fights which frequently resulted in injury to school property. The High-School Board joined in the co-operative plan of school improvement and through the Welfare Committee made announcement that if the classes would refrain from class fights and devote their energies to interclass and inter-school athletic contests, the board would put \$250 into athletic equipment, an amount equal to that spent the previous year in the repair of damaged school property. This met with unanimous

approval on the part of the students, and the trustees purchased the equipment. Interest in school activities increased, and the students found themselves beginning to work as a unit.

Another situation which confronted the Welfare Committee was the established custom of ducking the entering Freshmen. The Sophomores were the active participants, but the upper-class students spurred the younger students on. Even the High-School Board despaired of curbing the evil, which had several times resulted in personal injury to students. However, the Welfare Committee attacked the problem, and the second year the upper-class students placed certain limitations on the ducking which eliminated its more serious aspects. The third year the upper-class leaders met the Sophomore leaders and told them that they had taken a new view of the matter, namely, that the Freshmen were new citizens coming into their democracy and that it behooved them to welcome them with the same methods used by the best democracies. A committee of Sophomores waited on the principal in his office and asked his opinion. He told them that he himself had been a newcomer to their community a couple of years before and that, even though there was a convenient pool and fountain in front of the public library, he had not been ducked. On the contrary, he had been welcomed by a committee from the Chamber of Commerce and also a committee from the church and made to feel, by the citizens of the community, that he was one of them, entitled to all the enjoyments and privileges of their democratic community. The committee saw the matter in its broader light, and the Sophomore class of that year had the honor of freeing the school democracy from a custom that was working contrary to its best interests.

The Welfare Committee had proved its worth. It had become the nucleus of a co-operative student-faculty government emphasizing spirit more than form. The machinery of the committee has been added to from time to time, but the spirit of our school democracy has ever been held as essential for the operation of any form of government. Edmund Burke tried to bring before the English Parliament the vision of a "true democracy growing out of the nature and condition of things." We have tried to realize

that we are living in a school surrounded by real problems and that we as students and faculty are co-operatively responsible for the solution of these problems and the establishment of ideals in athletics, society, and scholarship.

As the size of the Welfare Committee grew, the idea was to make it more representative of the entire student body and faculty. First, the faculty representation was increased to five. Besides the principal, the girls' adviser, the boys' adviser, and two other teachers active in the social, athletic, or dramatic life of the school were included. The junior-college class president was then added to give representation to that body. The girls of the school were as yet without direct representation, unless some class or the student body chose a girl for president. About three years ago, however, a girls' league was organized in the school and the officers of the league, president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer, were added to the Welfare Committee. This plan had one defect, however. The constitution of the girls' league required the officers to be chosen from the two upper classes, and the Freshmen and Sophomore girls were still without direct representation. A plan was then adopted of electing four additional members, one from each class, and in case the majority of representatives from a class were boys this representative was to be a girl or vice versa.

The name of the body was then changed from Welfare Committee to Welfare Council. A brief constitution was adopted in order to keep before the students the objective of the welfare body. It is not the purpose of this body to usurp any of the rights or privileges of the various classes, the athletic committee, the study clubs, or the student body. It is a council to consider problems vitally related to the welfare of the school. It aims to unify and harmonize the various departments of school life, to consider the moral and social problems of the school, to create and maintain scholastic and moral standards in the school, and, above all, to create a vital, wholesome school spirit, in the atmosphere of which every school activity can work with ease and freedom.

At the beginning of the school year a dinner is usually served to the Welfare Council in the principal's home, followed by after-dinner talks on school policies. Plans are formulated for the year

with a view to school betterment. Last year the council set as one of its goals the securing of good assembly talent. An initial fund of \$225 was raised and such talent secured as Arthur Katchel in "The Music Master" and Miss Ruth Hutchinson, soloist, from the University of California Extension Division.

Another aim of the school last year as crystallized by the Welfare Council was the improvement of scholarship. Parallel with the introduction of supervised study, the student body initiated a system of scholarship awards, and at the close of the year fourteen scholarship pins and two debating pins were presented on commencement evening to honor students by the president

TABLE I
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF CLASS GRADES UNDER THE STUDY-HALL PLAN,
FIRST QUARTER, 1919-20

	Freshmen	Sophomores	Juniors	Seniors
Recommended marks:				
A.....	23	23	30	25
Br*.....	28	27	40	29
Total.....	51	50	70	54
Marks below recommendation:				
B.....	21	23	15	22
C.....	13	14	10	8
D+.....	11	6	4	15
D.....	4	7	1	1
Total.....	49	50	30	46

* Br=85 per cent, university recommendation mark.

of the High-School Board. The principal made a comparative study of the school grades of the year before and the year after the introduction of the supervised-study plan with its new co-operative scholarship incentives. These records are shown in Tables I and II.

Table III shows the improvement of the respective classes under the plan of supervised study and scholarship awards over their record of the year before under the old plan. The Freshmen, however, have no record with which to compare their 1920-21 marks except that of the preceding Freshmen, now Sophomores; hence the percentage of recommended marks of the present Sophomore class is used twice in the table.

There will never come a time when the council does not have a "real job" before it. Such a condition does not exist in our larger democracies unless the state is blind to its real needs. The writer once asked the superintendent of a George Junior Republic what the greatest problem was within the republic and he replied, "The same problem that you have in the larger world republic, namely, to keep the government in the hands of the best people

TABLE II

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF CLASS GRADES UNDER THE SUPERVISED-STUDY PLAN,
FIRST QUARTER, 1920-21

	Freshmen	Sophomores	Juniors	Seniors
Recommended marks:				
A.....	34	30	25	55
Br*.....	33	35	35	28
Total.....	67	65	60	83
Marks below recommendation:				
B.....	14	21	21	12
C.....	14	12	14	2.25
D+.....	3	1	3	2.25
D.....	2	1	2	0.5
Total.....	33	35	40	17

* Br=85 per cent, university recommendation mark.

TABLE III

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF RECOMMENDED MARKS, 1919-20 AND 1920-21

	Freshmen	Sophomores	Juniors	Seniors
1919-20.....	51	51	50	70
1920-21.....	67	65	60	83

and to foster a wholesome spirit of democracy." It is the aim of the Welfare Council of Citrus to be ever awake to the real situations in the school and to foster and develop by means of co-operative policies a school spirit that will be an inspiration to every student in the school.

CONSTITUTION OF THE WELFARE COUNCIL OF THE CITRUS UNION HIGH SCHOOL

ARTICLE I. PURPOSE AND NAME

In order to promote the highest type of relationship between different student organizations and faculty, to foster a desire for the best school order,

to develop a loyalty to Citrus and to all her activities, and to promote the general welfare of the school, this constitution establishing the Student Welfare Council has been adopted by the present student council and faculty committee.

ARTICLE II. FORM OF ORGANIZATION

The Student Welfare Council shall consist of student members from different student organizations, four faculty members appointed by the principal, and the principal.

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1. All class presidents, the student-body president and secretary, the girls' league officers, the junior-college class president, four appointed faculty members, and the principal shall be members of the council.

SEC. 2. There shall be four other members elected, one from each class, at the time of the regular class elections. In case the representative from a particular class is a boy, the representative chosen at large shall be a girl, or vice versa. Or if a majority of members from a certain class, as from the Senior class, for instance, are boys, the representative chosen at large shall be a girl, or vice versa.

ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS

The officers of this council shall be a president and a secretary. The student-body president shall be president of the council, and the student-body secretary shall be secretary of the council.

ARTICLE V. TERM OF OFFICE

The council shall be organized as soon after class and student-body elections as the principal and the student-body president may deem expedient. Membership in the council shall be for the period of a school year.

ARTICLE VI. AMENDMENT

SECTION 1. This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the council and the approval of the principal.

SEC. 2. A proposed amendment must be on the table one week before final action on it may be taken.

ARTICLE VII. RULES OF PROCEDURE

The student council representatives shall have power to adopt by-laws and rules of procedure.